

Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6450

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

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AMEMBASSY MADRID

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, SW, SP, PO, IS, MT

SUBJECT: SWEDISH TRAVEL AGENCY DIVERTS BUSINESS FROM SPAIN
TO PORTUGAL

REF: (A) OSLO 5718, (B) LISBON 7641, (C) STOCKHOLM 6469

1. STOCKHOLM NEWSPAPERS CARRIED REPORT DECEMBER 29 THAT RESO, BIG SWEDISH TRAVEL BUREAU THAT IS 60-PERCENT OWNED BY SWEDISH CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (LO), WILL ELIMINATE ALL TRAVEL TO SPAIN DURING SUMMER 1976 AND SUBSTITUTE TRAVEL TO PORTUGAL. RESO DIRECTOR STURE KELMELING WAS QUOTED BY PRESS AS SAYING, "WE WILL AVOID TRAVEL TO SPAIN AS LONG AS THE COUNTRY IS A DICTATORSHIP. THE RESO BOARD CAN RECONSIDER IF THAT COUNTRY SHOWS SIGNS OF BECOMING DEMOCRATIC . . . AS A TOURIST GOAL, PORTUGAL IS EQUIVALENT TO SPAIN IN ALL RESPECTS."

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2. LO, ALONG WITH SWEDISH CENTRAL ORGANIZATION OF SALRIED EMPLOYEES (TCO), WHICH OWNS 20 PERCENT OF RESO, URGED ITS MEMBERS TO BOYCOTT SPAIN AFTER EXECUTION OF FIVE BASQUE SEPARATISTS LAST SEPTEMBER. THROUGHOUT FALL RESO HAS BEEN POINTING OUT ALTERNATIVE DELIGHTS OF MADEIRA, ISRAEL, MALTA, RHODES, AND CRETE. URGING CONTINUED AFTER FRANCO'S DEATH NOVEMBER 20.

3. COMMENT. IN CONVERSATION WITH KELMELING, EMBOFF CONFIRMED THAT ONE PURPOSE OF MOVE WAS TO AID PORTUGAL. REF A REPORTED PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST LEADER MARIO SOARES' APPEAL FOR INCREASED TOURISM. REF B NOTED THAT NEGOTIATIONS ARE IN PROGRESS BETWEEN PORTUGAL AND LARGE SCANDINAVIAN TOURIST AGENCIES. AMONG THOSE WHO MET WITH SOARES DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO SWEDEN WAS LO CHAIRMAN GUNNAR NILSSON, WHO IS ALSO BOARD CHAIRMAN OF RESO (REF C). IT APPEARS PROBABLE THAT LATEST RESO DECISION RESPONDS TO SOARES' APPEAL FOR TOURISM AS WELL AS TO COMPANY'S NEED TO KEEP UP ITS BUSINESS AFTER BOYCOTT OF SPAIN. LO AND ITS MEMBERS PROVIDE THE MAJOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND MEMBERSHIP FOR SWEDISH SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

4. JUST HOW MUCH RESO BOYCOTT WILL HURT SPAIN AND HELP PORTUGAL IS UNCLEAR; ALL OTHER SWEDISH TRAVEL AGENCIES EXCEPT RESO CONTINUE TO ARRANGE CHARTERS TO SPAIN. RESO INFORMATION OFFICER SAID COMPANY PLANNED TO MOUNT SPECIAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN IN NEW YEAR AND HOPED SCHEDULE 5-8 FLIGHTS A WEEK TO PORTUGUESE MAINLAND AND 2 TO MADEIRA.
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